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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/663,488	09/16/2003	Joseph P. Errico	F-291	2425
530	7590	02/17/2006	EXAMINER	
LERNER, DAVID, LITTENBERG, KRUMHOLZ & MENTLIK 600 SOUTH AVENUE WEST WESTFIELD, NJ 07090			PELLEGRINO, BRIAN E	
			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
			3738	

DATE MAILED: 02/17/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/663,488

Applicant(s)

ERRICO ET AL.

Examiner

Brian E. Pellegrino

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 16 September 2003.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-12 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-12 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 - ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date 3/18/05.
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

Priority

An application in which the benefits of an earlier application are desired must contain a specific reference to the prior application(s) in the first sentence of the specification of in an application data sheet (37 CFR 1.78(a)(2) and (a)(5)). The specific reference to any prior nonprovisional application **must include the relationship** (i.e., continuation, divisional, or continuation-in-part) between the applications except when the reference is to a prior application of a CPA assigned the same application number.

Specification

The lengthy specification has not been checked to the extent necessary to determine the presence of all possible minor errors. Applicant's cooperation is requested in correcting any errors of which applicant may become aware in the specification.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

Claims 1-3,5,6,12 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Marnay (5314477). Fig. 1 shows an intervertebral spacer device with first and second

baseplates (110,120) that are articulatable relative to one another via surfaces 21 and 22. It can also be seen the baseplates include a plurality of engagement holes (115,116,125,126) that are engageable with extending posts (812,813,822,823) on the distal end of the manipulation tool 80 shown in Figs. 10, 11. It can be construed that the posts of the tool are retractable when the surgeon retracts the posts out of the prosthesis after insertion. In order to be given patentable weight, a functional recitation must be supported by recitation in the claim of sufficient structure to warrant the presence of the functional language. See *In re Fuller*. Please note the intended use, as set forth in the claims, carries no weight in the absence of any distinguishing structure. Thus the spinal device is fully capable of having the desired surgical approach aspects.

Claims 1-3,5-9,11,12 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Gill et al. (6113637). Fig. 2 shows an intervertebral spacer device with first and second baseplates (22,24) that are articulatable relative to one another. It can be seen (Fig. 5) the baseplates include three engagement holes (56,58,60) that are engageable with extending posts (84,79) on the distal end of the manipulation tool 70 shown in Fig. 14a. It can be construed that the posts of the tool are retractable when the surgeon retracts the posts out of the prosthesis after insertion. In order to be given patentable weight, a functional recitation must be supported by recitation in the claim of sufficient structure to warrant the presence of the functional language. See *In re Fuller*. Please note the intended use, as set forth in the claims, carries no weight in the absence of any distinguishing structure. Thus the spinal device is fully capable of having the desired surgical approach aspects.

Claims 1-12 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Young et al. (6190414). Fig. 10 shows an intervertebral spacer device with first and second baseplates (**158,160**) that are articulatable relative to one another via joint **162**. It can also be seen the baseplates include a plurality of engagement holes (**170,166,172**) that are engageable with an extendible and retractable post **140** on the distal end of the manipulation tool **120** shown in Fig. 7. The examiner is interpreting the claimed element "engagement hole" in this way: a cavity in something solid or an opening. Claims in a pending application should be given their broadest reasonable interpretation. *In re Pearson*, 181 USPQ 641 (CCPA 1974). See also *In re Morris*, Fed. Cir. 1997 127 F3d 1048, 1054,1055. In this case Young shows both types of interpretations of a hole, with the post engaging at least the one hole **170,172** in each baseplate on the inward facing surfaces. Please note the intended use, as set forth in the claims, carries no weight in the absence of any distinguishing structure. Thus the spinal device is fully capable of having the desired surgical approach aspects.

Double Patenting

The nonstatutory double patenting rejection is based on a judicially created doctrine grounded in public policy (a policy reflected in the statute) so as to prevent the unjustified or improper timewise extension of the "right to exclude" granted by a patent and to prevent possible harassment by multiple assignees. A nonstatutory obviousness-type double patenting rejection is appropriate where the conflicting claims are not identical, but at least one examined application claim is not patentably distinct from the reference claim(s) because the examined application claim is either anticipated by, or would have been obvious over, the reference claim(s). See, e.g., *In re Berg*, 140 F.3d 1428, 46 USPQ2d 1226 (Fed. Cir. 1998); *In re Goodman*, 11 F.3d 1046, 29 USPQ2d 2010 (Fed. Cir. 1993); *In re Longi*, 759 F.2d 887, 225 USPQ 645 (Fed. Cir. 1985); *In re Van Ornum*, 686 F.2d 937, 214 USPQ 761 (CCPA 1982); *In re Vogel*, 422

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F.2d 438, 164 USPQ 619 (CCPA 1970); and *In re Thorington*, 418 F.2d 528, 163 USPQ 644 (CCPA 1969).

A timely filed terminal disclaimer in compliance with 37 CFR 1.321(c) or 1.321(d) may be used to overcome an actual or provisional rejection based on a nonstatutory double patenting ground provided the conflicting application or patent either is shown to be commonly owned with this application, or claims an invention made as a result of activities undertaken within the scope of a joint research agreement.

Effective January 1, 1994, a registered attorney or agent of record may sign a terminal disclaimer. A terminal disclaimer signed by the assignee must fully comply with 37 CFR 3.73(b).

Claims 1-12 are provisionally rejected on the ground of nonstatutory obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 1,5-7,12,15,17,19 of copending Application No. 10/663492. Although the conflicting claims are not identical, they are not patentably distinct from each other because this application's claims are merely broader than the pending claims of 10/663492. See *In re Goodman*. The '492 claims at least a pair of engagement holes on at least one baseplate, which would anticipate "at least one engagement hole on at least one baseplate" in this application. Both also claim a manipulation tool with a distal end post.

This is a provisional obviousness-type double patenting rejection because the conflicting claims have not in fact been patented.

Claims 1,2 are rejected on the ground of nonstatutory obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claim 1 of U.S. Patent No. 6896676. Although the conflicting claims are not identical, they are not patentably distinct from each other because both claims are directed to a spinal implant that has two baseplates that are articulatable and a tool with a shaft or post used with the device. The '676 patent claim recites the implant has bearing elements, which is known in the art to permit articulation.

This application's claims are merely broader than the claim of the '676 patent. The claims both also recite engagement holes.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Brian E. Pellegrino whose telephone number is 571-272-4756. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Thursday from 7am to 4:30pm. The examiner can also be reached on alternate Fridays.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Corrine McDermott, can be reached at 571-272-4754. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

TC 3700, AU 3738

BRIAN E. PELLEGRINO
PRIMARY EXAMINER

